

PIERCE COUNTY FIRE COMMISSIONERS ASSOCIATION BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I

NAME

The name of this organization shall be PIERCE COUNTY FIRE COMMISSIONERS ASSOCIATION, hereinafter referred to as the Association.

ARTICLE II

OBJECTIVES

Section 1. Achieve by unity of action and exchange of information a greater efficiency in the protection of lives and property in Pierce County.

Section 2. To be on the alert and actively lobby to prevent any attempt to weaken the Fire Protection and/or Emergency Medical Service in Pierce County.

ARTICLE III

MEMBERSHIP

Membership shall consist of three (3) categories:

ACTIVE, HONORARY LIFE, or ASSOCIATE

- A. ACTIVE – shall consist of all elected or appointed fire commissioners whose current dues have been paid.
- B. HONORARY LIFE – those elected or appointed fire commissioners who have been members of the Association for ten (10) years or more.
- C. ASSOCIATE – friends of the Association who have performed services that warrant this consideration and are approved annually by the Board; and those other persons or businesses connected with the objectives of this Association.

IDENTIFICATION

Name tags are required for all members at the meetings. Those failing to meet this requirement shall contribute one dollar (\$1.00) to the Association treasury.

ETHICS

The Association strives for the highest possible ethical standards for the Association and each of its members. To that end, no member should participate in any manner on an issue with respect to which the member has any conflict of interest, to wit, any personal or pecuniary interest in the matter or bias that would prevent the member from placing the interests of the Association before the member's personal or private interest.

RECOGNITION AND AWARDS

CATEGORIES FOR RECOGNITIONS:

A. Bill Jarmon Achievement Award (plaque award)

1. This award is based on a body of work and commitment by the recipient to the citizens they were elected to serve, the fire service and its members, the recipient of this award has demonstrated to their peers and the citizens, by their involvement from serving on State, local committees, boards and being elected to other leadership roles, which by their actions have resulted in safer communities for all of us to work and live in.
2. The individual is chosen by the awards committee or from nominations sent to the awards committee.
3. Plaque award is presented by the Nominator and/or the President of the Association *highest award* given by the Association.
4. Plaque award is presented at the Annual Banquet.

B. Distinguished Service Award (plaque award)

1. For outstanding and/or exemplary action by an Association member outside the scope of the normal membership.
2. The individual is chosen by the awards committee or from nominations sent to the awards committee.
3. Plaque award is presented by the Nominator and/or the President of the Association *second highest award* given by the Association.
4. Plaque award is presented at the Annual Banquet.

C. Meritorious Service Award (plaque award)

1. For any association member who have performed distinguished service to this association and/or to his or her community.
2. The member is chosen by the awards committee or from nomination sent to the awards committee
3. Plaque award is presented by the Nominator and/or the President of the Association *third highest award* given by the Association.
4. Plaque award is presented at the Annual Banquet.

D. Special Recognition Award (plaque award)

1. Accomplishment by a citizen or member of the association for customer service, heroic performance, assistance at an emergency scene, or other service to the community.
2. The individual (s) is chosen by nominations from the members of the association and/or community members *fourth highest award* given by the Association.
3. Plaque is presented by the president of the association or the nominating person involved, to the citizen or association member at the Annual Banquet or association meeting.

E. Letter of Commendation

1. Accomplishment acknowledged for a task or project benefiting the Association or Community.
2. The individual is chosen by the awards committee or from nominations sent to the awards committee.
3. Letter is presented by the Nominator and/or the President of the Association.
4. Letter is presented at the Annual Banquet.

F. Service Award;

1. For years of service to the Department given ceremoniously in 5-year increments after receiving Honorary Life Membership.
2. Award is presented by the President at the Annual Banquet.
3. Recognition is given at the Annual Banquet.

G. Honorary Life Members (plaque award)

1. For members who have served a minimum of ten (10) years of service.
2. Award is presented by the President.
3. Given at the Annual Awards Banquet.

ARTICLE IV

DISCRIMINATION

The Association shall not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, age, sex or sexual preference, marital status, or physical, sensory or mental handicaps, or disability, unless mandated by business necessity.

ARTICLE V

VOTING RIGHTS

Section 1. Each active member shall be entitled to one (1) vote on each matter submitted to a vote of the membership. Honorary members and Associate members shall not be entitled to vote.

Section 2. It shall be necessary for at least five (5) fire districts to be represented to establish a quorum.

ARTICLE VI

OFFICERS

Any active member shall be entitled to hold office. The officers of this Association shall be President, Vice President, three (3) Directors and the immediate past president. The President and Vice President shall be elected each year for a one (1) year term. The Directors shall be elected for a term of three (3) years, with one being elected each year for a three (3) year term.

These six officers will be known as the Executive Board. No officer may serve for more than two (2) consecutive terms in the same office, excepting the president and then only when no candidate for that office is forthcoming.

ARTICLE VII

DUTIES

Section 1. OFFICERS

The President shall be the Chairperson of the Association and the Executive Board. He/She shall preside over the meetings, and shall appoint the committees as necessary. He/She shall call any special meeting of the association and/or the Executive Board.

The Vice President shall perform the duties of the President when the President is absent, and shall serve as program chairperson.

The Secretary/Treasurer shall be appointed by the Executive Board with the approval of the Association and shall be paid expenses, the amount approved by the Association. The Secretary/Treasurer shall transcribe the minutes, collect the

dues, make all disbursements of the Association funds; which shall be approved by the Association at the regular meetings, and immediately after each election or after the resignation of any officer, supply the current banking institution(s) with a document containing the signatures of the three people who have check signing authority, namely the president, vice president, and the secretary/treasurer.

Section 2. EXECUTIVE BOARD

The Executive Board shall meet prior to the first meeting of the year and at any other time as called by the President; or a special meeting of the Executive Board may be called by any three members of the Board.

It shall be necessary for three members of the Executive Board to be present to establish a quorum.

It shall be the duty of the Executive Board to prepare a budget prior to the first meeting of the year to be submitted to the body for approval.

Section 3. COMMITTEES - CANDIDATE, AUDIT, AND OTHER

- A. CANDIDATE – The President shall appoint a nominating committee for the purpose of selecting at least one (1) candidate for each office. This shall be done at the meeting in August. The report of the nominating committee shall be submitted to the membership in writing at the September meeting, and shall be voted on at the November regular meeting.
- B. AUDIT – The President shall appoint an audit committee prior to the first meeting of the year. The committee will consist of three (3) current members; one (1) officer of the Association and two (2) Directors. The audit report shall consist of a review of all financial records and recommendation for approval by the general membership.
- C. OTHER – The President shall appoint any other committees as deemed necessary during the year.

ARTICLE VIII

ELECTIONS

The election of the officers shall be held at the November meeting each year. The nominating committee list and any other candidates as nominated from the floor shall be voted on at this time. If one candidate has the majority of the votes cast, that person shall be elected; however if more than two are nominated for a position, the two top candidates would have a runoff and the other(s) would drop out.

The new officers shall take office the first meeting of the New Year.

ARTICLE IX

MEETINGS

The meetings of this Association shall be the fourth (4th) Thursday of each month except October, November and December unless otherwise designated by the body.

ARTICLE X

DUES

Each fire district shall pay dues, the amount to be decided by the Executive Board and ratified by the body. Schedule attached.

Associate members shall not have a vote but may be levied an administrative fee.

ARTICLE XI

AMENDMENT OF BYLAWS

The bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote at any regular meeting or one called for the purpose. However, the amendments shall be submitted to the Executive Board and referred to the bylaws committee prior to being brought to the body for discussion and voting.

ARTICLE XII

CODE OF CONDUCT

PREAMBLE

Public confidence of Fire Commissioners is eroded by irresponsible or improper conduct by Fire Commissioners. A Fire Commissioner must expect to be the subject of public scrutiny. The prohibition against behaving improperly or in an irresponsible manner applies to both the professional and personal conduct of a commissioner.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A FIRE COMMISSIONER

The following is designed to provide guidance to and for commissioners:

1. A Fire Commissioner should Respect and Comply with the Law and should Act at all times in a manner that promotes public confidence in the office of Fire Commissioner.
2. A Fire Commissioner should participate in Establishing, Maintaining, and Enforcing high standards of conduct, and should personally observe those standards.
3. Fire Commissioners should exhibit unquestionable Integrity. The commissioners should have an uprightness of character and soundness of moral principle.
4. Fire Commissioners should have a National Pride, a High Regard for the Constitution, and the authority of their office, and show respect for others

through temperance, fairness, and civility in the execution of their duties and conduct of personal lives.

5. A Fire Commissioner should have the Courage to do what is right and if necessary stand up for those without authority.
6. A Fire Commissioner should have Compassion that is inherent to understanding another's problems while controlling and understanding personal feelings.

I COMMISSIONERS CODE OF ETHICS

1 Any Commissioner who has committed an act or acts of Malfeasance, or an act or acts of Misfeasance while in office, or has violated the Oath of Office, or is guilty of two or more acts specified in the Washington Constitution, or violations of the statutes and administrative directives applicable to fire districts, MAY be disciplined using penalties found in Section II.

For the purposes of this Association:

- (1) Misfeasance or malfeasance in office means any wrongful conduct that affects, interrupts, or interferes with the performance of official duties.
 - (a) Additionally "Misfeasance" in office means the performance of a duty in an improper manner; and
 - (b) "Malfeasance" in office means the commission of an unlawful act.
- (2) "Violation of The Oath of Office" means the neglect or knowing failure by an elected public official to perform faithfully a duty imposed by law.
- (3) Also prohibited are violations of RCW 42.23.030 and RCW 42.23.070 concerning ethical conflicts of interest such as interest in a contract directly or indirectly administered as a fire commissioner. Additionally a commissioner cannot
 - (a) Use their position to secure special privileges or exemptions,
 - (b) Give or receive any gift, rewards or gratuity related to their post,
 - (c) Accept employment or business that might induce them to disclose confidential information acquired by reason of their position, (divided loyalty)
 - (d) Or disclose confidential information gained by reason of their employment, or use such information for personal gain.
- (4) There are numerous other violations listed under RCW 42.20 and RCW 42.23 that are too numerous to list, but are included by reference in the Code.

II. PROCEDURES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INVESTIGATIONS AND PUNISHMENT

1. Upon receipt of a written, signed request for investigation of a possible ethics violation(s) the Executive Board of the Pierce County Fire Commissioners Association, by 2/3 majority may direct the President to appoint an investigative committee.
 - (1) The committee will be comprised of at least three disinterested commissioners, from three separate districts.
 - (2) The committee shall have two months after appointment to investigate the charges that have been made.
 - (3) The person being investigated will be given an opportunity to explain/rebut the charges that have been made.
 - (4) The committee will then report their findings to the President and Executive Board. The report will include recommendations for penalties if warranted.
2. If the investigating committee has found the charges to be valid, the Executive Board may direct the President to take one of the following steps:
 - (1) First Offense – minor infraction – The President, at the direction of the Executive Board, will notify the accused by letter of the findings, but no penalty will be assessed. (Copies of all letters retained for six years)
 - (2) First Offense – major infraction – (misfeasance, malfeasance, violation of Washington Constitution, or Violation of RCW's relating to fire departments) the President, at the direction of the Executive Board, will write a Letter of Censure with a cc to the State Commissioners Association. A copy will be made available to the recall committee if requested.
 - (3) Second or subsequent infractions – the President, at the direction of the Executive Board, will write a letter requesting that the commissioner refrain from attending County Fire Commissioners meetings and training, and the commissioner will be barred from Life Membership in the County Association. Again a letter will be sent to the State Association requesting similar measures, and copy will be available to a recall committee upon request.

ARTICLE X111

RULES OF ORDER

The rules of order shall be the Roberts Rules of Order, the latest revised edition. This shall include a Sergeant-at-Arms, as appointed by the President.